

## Introducing Sweeney Ridge



### WELCOME!

Sweeney Ridge became part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1984, bringing your Park "next door" to San Mateo County. Sweeping views of the Pacific coastline, San Francisco Bay, and undeveloped lands to the south await your visit to Sweeney Ridge. Hiking and horseback riding are popular activities along trails that lead through this 1,047

acre addition to the Park. A visit to Sweeney Ridge in springtime discloses a magnificent display as the hills turn gold with California Poppies and dozens of other wild flowers. The grassland and coastal scrub community of the ridge is home to a great diversity of wildlife from gopher and quail to bobcat and coyote. Most commonly seen are hawks, songbirds, brush rabbits,

and, at times, deer. In addition to its scenic beauty and diversity of wildlife habitats, Sweeney Ridge is the location where San Francisco Bay was discovered by the Spanish. All this and its value as recreational open space inspired citizens to work for its inclusion into the National Park Service.

### DISCOVERY OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY

On November 4, 1769, an expeditionary party for Spain led by Captain Gaspar de Portola climbed to the top of Sweeney Ridge. A member of the group wrote in his diary for that day that they saw a, "...large arm of the sea...Some mountains were made out that seemed to make an opening, and it seemed to us the estuary must go in there, as if there were some sort of harbor there within the mountains..."

The discovery of San Francisco Bay was little appreciated by the Spanish at the time. In 1769 Spain, fearing Russian settlement in California, decided to establish control of the area by founding settlements at San Diego and Monterey. This was the mission that Portola, governor of Baja California, volunteered to undertake. He and his men were to march by land from the tip of Baja California to Monterey at a time when the only known route was by sea. Portola

failed in this first attempt to find and settle Monterey Bay, but succeeded in being the first European to sight the San Francisco Bay. At the time, he did not realize the importance of his discovery. It was not until 1775 that the Spanish charted the magnificent harbor and the following year, 1776, founded San Francisco.

Today, a marker commemorates the Portola Discovery Site at the top of Sweeney Ridge.

### ABOUT YOUR VISIT

The major access to Sweeney Ridge is by car from the west end of Sneath Lane, off Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) in San Bruno. From Sneath Lane it is a 1.8 mile walk to the Discovery Site.

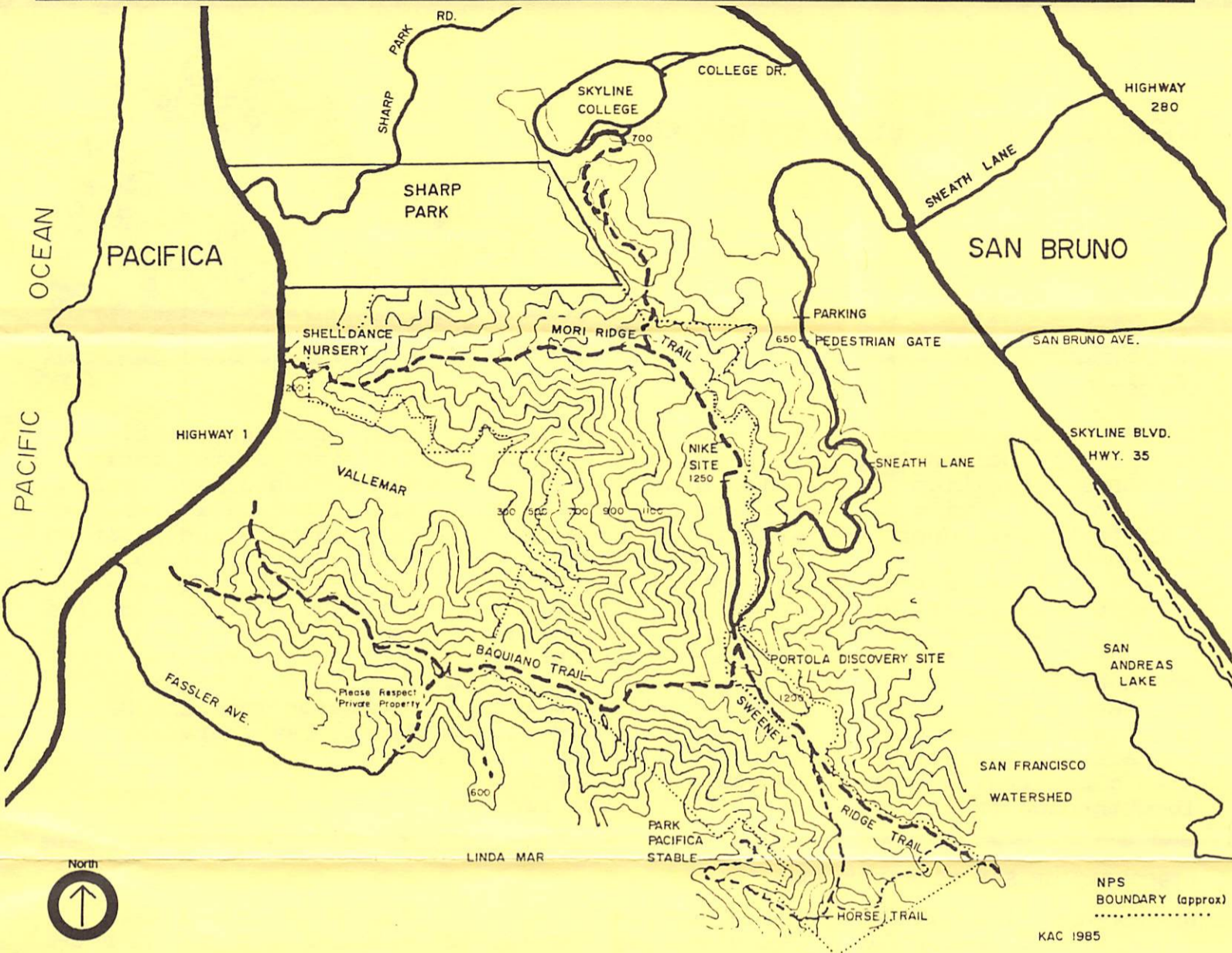
Spring and Fall offer the best weather and clear skies. Fog is

most frequent during the summer. Weather can change rapidly with the sudden appearance of fog. Wear layered clothing that can be adjusted with changing temperatures. Remember trail landmarks and refer to trail map especially when visibility is poor. Fires, camping, and off-road vehicles are not permitted.

All dogs must be kept on a leash. Please help us care for Sweeney Ridge by carrying out your litter and pet droppings.

Ranger led hikes are offered periodically throughout the year. Call (415) 556-8371 for program information or further assistance.

# Sweeney Ridge



## HOW TO GET THERE

**Sneath Lane** - Take Highway 280 or 35 (Skyline Blvd.) to the Sneath Lane exit in San Bruno. Follow Sneath Lane west all the way to the end at Sweeney Ridge gate. Park in the designated parking areas.

**Skyline College** - Take Highway 35 to San Bruno. Turn west on College

Drive, following it to the south side of the campus. Look for parking area #2.

**Shelldance Nursery** - Take Highway 1 to Pacifica, 1/2 mile south of Sharp Park Blvd. Shelldance is on the east side of the road. Southbound traffic cannot turn left at the nursery, continue south

to the first traffic light and turn around.

**Fassler Avenue** - Take highway 1 to the Rockaway Beach area of Pacifica. Follow Fassler Ave. east to the end at gate.

## MILEAGE TO DISCOVERY SITE

**From:**  
 Sneath Lane Gate..... 1.8 miles  
 Skyline College..... 2.0 miles  
 (Parking Area #2)  
 Shelldance Nursery..... 2.4 miles  
 (Highway 1)  
 Sweeney Ridge Trail..... 1.1 miles  
 (Portola Gate)  
 Fassler Avenue Gate..... 1.5 miles  
 (Ranger guided walks only. Private property closed to the public for the first 1/2 mile).

